I am a strong proponent of Internet neutrality for a number of reasons upon which I will now expound.

1: The strength and flexibility which make the Internet such a strong medium for information exchange lie in its decentralization. The concept is that if one component part is brought down, the rest do not suffer. Allowing Internet service providers to shape Internet traffic rather than allowing it to flow free-form across their provided services runs counter to this concept. If a particular Internet service provider's networks encounter serious problems, or perhaps become a victim of deliberate denial of service attacks by malicious individuals, consumers may lose the integral functionality of their Internet, which would then become a less viable or possibly inviable means of information transference.

2: The Internet is such a potent medium largely because it is standards compliant. Allowing Internet service providers to shape Internet traffic as they see fit encourages the adoption or creation of internal technologies for doing so which will be non-compliant with established standards. This is deleterious in a number of ways. It carries a heavy potential for services to become incompatible with one another, thus denying the consumer access to valuable information or communication potential for content which is provided by another network. An example would be a managed information services firm offering clients off-site data backup services. For the sake of example this firm provides the best off-site data backup solutions of any company in its class and has excellent rates, but happens to be obtaining Internet access from a service provider with a network management scheme which makes it incompatible for certain potential clients, thus costing the company money and denying the clients access to what would be a superior service. Furthermore, when exploitable errors are found in established Internet standards, they can easily be corrected and once fixed, apply to every user and provider. With the introduction of proprietary methods of Internet regulation unique to each provider this is no longer the case. Exploits can be custom developed to affect a weakness in a particular provider's network traffic shaping solution, exploiting customers and carrying the risk for denial of service or theft of data. These exploits will also carry an amount of obfuscation unseen on the traditional Internet model in use today, as they will be specific to a particular vendor and will may not be noticed in a rapid manner. This leads for even greater potential of cyber-terrorism and corporate espionage, as it would be no harder for a rival provider to sabotage another provider's network as it would for another nation or radical group to do so.

Further, this will undoubtedly increase the amount of cyber-crime carried out by individual users or groups of users in an effort to make their own service neutral. Each time restrictions are placed on the Internet, such individuals and groups rise to meet it and are more often than not successful in their attempts. Such individuals do not care if their actions violate their service agreement or if they are illegal. Network traffic shaping begs this type of behavior.

5: Customers pay for bandwidth and access to information. In all cases, from a technological standpoint, accessing a resource using Company A's service operating on X bandwidth should yield the same results as accessing the same resource using company

B's service operating on the same bandwidth. This is not so when traffic shaping is introduced. The consumer has paid for access to information at a particular rate, and has paid for the underlying technologies to achieve this, but will be denied in some cases due to arbitrarily forced restrictions by their particular service provider. Those living outside of large areas often do not have the choice between many large providers, or may only have one choice for access. These individuals would be severely affected, as they could not choose which service to move to if dissatisfied by their provider's network traffic shaping scheme. A neutral Internet does not pose this problem, information flows as it should.

4: As a vehicle for information from all parts of the world and all areas of human knowledge, the Internet is a powerful tool for expression and exploration, which transmits ideas and information. Any Internet user is free to express themselves, and has the freedom to obtain information which they believe to be important. By allowing Internet traffic shaping, such freedom is denied. Companies are allowed to decide which information is most important to consumers. Such strict and arbitrary regulation of information for the individual citizen is something that is often seen in Fascist or Communist states and runs counter to the founding principles of the United States.

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